

Organized Public Comments concerning the April 26 Meeting on the Crystal Cove Historic District

Scope of comments: This listing of public input represents general comments and short-term or generalized long-term use proposals for the cottages. The more comprehensive and detailed long-term use proposals are not included in this listing but are summarized on pages 3 and 4 of Newsletter #2.

Sources of comments: The following 283 tabulated comments incorporate input from 28 public presentations, 49 issue table “post-its,” 40 returned surveys, and 8 letters received between April 27 and May 10, 2001).

[99 comments or 35% of input] Recreational Facilities and Visitor Services

[15] Provide full public access

1. The terms of the Coastal Conservancy buyout of the resort contract requires “maximization of public access”.
2. Maximize public access.
3. Public access for all to enjoy.
4. I do believe in public access.
5. Full public access.
6. Maximum public access.
7. We should not be afraid to provide the public with the full access envisioned by the existing 1982 General Plan.
8. Public use should be the primary goal.
9. Should provide low-cost public access as called for in the 1982 general plan.
10. No need for a “carrying capacity” because parking lots will limit visitors. I am concerned about businesses bussing people into the park.
11. Accommodate handicapped needs.
12. Make beach handicapped accessible.
13. Perhaps access points for those with disabilities.
14. The Historic District should definitely primarily serve the general public, but there is also a place for special interests to play a minor role.
15. Adaptive uses of the cottages should primarily serve the general public rather than specialized interests.

[15] Provide day-use only and limit access and activities

1. Leave cottages as they are. Use as day-use only.
2. Day-use makes more sense.
3. Day-use only.
4. Maintain as a day-use area.
5. Very limited uses. Limit to day-use only.
6. I would agree to day-use only (with hostel away from beach).
7. Plan day-use only for the cottages (except for rangers’ residences). No large concerts or events.
8. No large groups.
9. No concerts.

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10. No concerts.
11. Public access means enjoying not destroying! Limit use of cabins and district to day use visitors like artists, school kids, researchers, and hikers.
12. Encourage public use of the cove in harmony with the natural, historical, and archeological features for passive recreation (no non-scientific diving)
13. Open to all people in limited numbers to protect environment.
14. Establish a holding capacity.
15. Concerned about overwhelming the carrying capacity of the area.

[12] Exclude visitor services or beach facilities

1. No concessions should be added.
2. No new visitor services.
3. Do not provide any visitor services.
4. Cafes, etc. are not a positive addition to this area.
5. No café.
6. No hot dog stands.
7. Uses such as concerts and food services will only bring in additional “people pollution.”
8. Fear carrying capacity will be exceeded
9. No concessions or commercial uses
10. Nothing commercial. No food facilities.
11. No adaptive uses. No snack bar, no stores, no businesses.
12. No commercial endeavors. We need unspoiled areas like this for our soul. Those that can’t appreciate that shouldn’t go here.

[11] Provide traditional affordable public overnight accommodations

1. Some cottages should be restored and rented to the public at a very affordable rate.
2. Give people an opportunity to spend the night at Crystal Cove at affordable rates.
3. 25-35 cottages should be for overnight use.
4. Provide overnite rentals at reasonable cost.
5. The cottages should be made fully available to the public for daily use including short-term overnight rental of all or most usable cottages.
6. Use cottages for overnight short-term rentals.
7. Eventually rent the cottages to the public for a few days to a week. That is true public access. That is really making it available to the public.
8. Provide one or two-week rentals. Painters would find such rentals great. Painters could give workshops in return for a week’s rental.
9. The Coastal Act requires rehabilitating the cottages for low-cost public use!
10. Lower cost recreational facilities and housing is to be encouraged.
11. As a state park we need to have the cottages available to the public for vacation use at reasonable prices.

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[8] Limit development and environmental impacts

1. No new development.
2. Please add no new buildings.
3. Simple bathrooms.
4. Roads should remain “rustic”
5. No additional recreation facilities should be constructed.
6. Minimum infrastructure: beach comfort station and lifeguard tower.
7. Create “eco-tourist” demonstration project with minimal environmental impacts.
8. Limit the facilities using either separately housed composting, chemical or other toilets that meet A.D.A. requirements.

[8] Have rangers live in cottages for security

1. Restore and use the 10 best cottages for ranger housing.
2. Letting the rangers live in the cottages seems to me to be more productive than to continue the “exclusionary” tenant environment now present.
3. Have park personnel provide security.
4. I believe in the park staff occupying a portion of these homes.
5. Some of the cottages should be housing for the rangers to provide 24/7 protection.
6. 24 hour lifeguard housing and headquarters for public safety.
7. I support park residences.
8. A place for rangers to live.

[7] Provide visitor services and beach facilities

1. Develop restrooms and drinking fountains for beach users.
2. Put restrooms in one or two restored cottages.
3. Sanitary facilities that use new ecologically sound methods should be considered along with solar energy for power.
4. The public’s main use of the cove will be for beaching. The plan must accommodate a large number of beach goers.
5. Provide picnic areas and restroom facilities. Investigate feasibility of building a stairway to Shake Shack.
6. Lockers for scuba divers (no scuba classes). Changing area.
7. A better road and a small parking area for handicapped access and will be helpful.

[6] Exclude overnight accommodations

1. Hostels don’t belong in beach.
2. No hostel use of cottages.
3. Cottages should not be used for sleeping/overnight purposes.
4. No overnight uses.
5. No overnight accommodations.
6. No residential or overnight or hostel facilities.

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[5] Provide low budget hostel-like accommodations

1. Some cottages should be used for hostel purposes.
2. Youth hostel for walkers and bicyclists.
3. Use vacant cottages for hostels, etc.
4. A hostel would serve many bicyclists and backpackers using PCH, both U.S. and international visitors. Give priority to those arriving by foot and bicycle.
5. Support minimal facilities hostel away from beach (no expensive plumbing).

[4] No exterior lighting

1. No bright lights. Keep the night sky natural.
2. No exterior lighting.
3. Night lights will destroy the ambiance and not help the wildlife.
4. Lighting and noise pollution may affect wildlife.

[3] Limit parking

1. Minimize parking within historic district.
2. Limit parking to the existing Los Trancos area.
3. No new parking should be developed on the ocean side of coast highway.

[2] Provide tent camping opportunities

1. The best and most important use of the cove is to provide places for tents and sleeping bags for those who want the experience of actually living at the beach, if only for one night.
2. Bluff top areas separate from cottages should be made available for tent camping.

[2] Make this project environmentally sustainable

1. Project should be an example of environmentally sustainable design.
2. Use solar power.

[1] Provide RV facility

1. Build new RV park along bluffs and keep everyone happy.

[63 comments or 22% of input] Preservation of Cultural Resources and Values

[15] Fix up and use unoccupied cottages

1. Restore the six boarded-up cottages for public rentals.
2. Restore the six vacant and deteriorated buildings and use one for a ranger residence and the others for rentals.
3. Use rents to refurbish the six vacant and failing cottages.
4. Provide long-term leases on lottery basis for unoccupied cottages.
5. Restore and repair the vacant cottages! Their neglect is a crime!
6. Why were several of the cottages scandalously allowed to deteriorate so badly?

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7. The vacant cottages should be leased on a lottery basis. Current residents should have priority to lease those cottages when they leave.
8. Empty cottages should be fixed and rented on a lottery basis. Rents should be applied toward fixing the cottages.
9. State should show how it can fix up cottages.
10. An alternative to the vacant cottages could be the housing of additional park staff or by providing for a month to month rental to the general public or some combination thereof. The monthly rents could effectively be raised by 50% and those funds could then be directed to a restoration fund. In a two-year planning process the state could realistically raise \$1.5 million.
11. Use vacant cottages for staff residences first.
12. Renovate abandoned cottages first and lease those too.
13. Please restore the 6 empty cottages.
14. Let rangers live in and start fixing up closed cottages until a plan is in place.
15. Repair empty cottages for ranger, hostel, group, or non-profit use or let contractors restore them at their cost in exchange for free rent.

[13] Preserve the seclusion and character of Crystal Cove

1. Keep the flavor and charm of Crystal Cove intact.
2. The cove is a very unique place as it is and needs to be preserved as it is.
3. A strong community will protect Crystal Cove.
4. The best way to keep the character of the district is to keep its use as similar to the historic use as possible. The individual decision-making that has occurred in creating these cottages should continue to occur in their preservation.
5. The historical district should reflect period landscape of naturalized non-native plants.
6. Emphasize “roughing it” and seclusion.
7. Any change takes away from this wonderful natural setting.
8. I’m here to tell you that any change along the west side of PCH is a further degradation to the California experience.
9. My concern is that these structures are so fragile that a mass decision-making approach to their restoration will result in destruction of the character of the district.
10. Character of area can’t be kept if converted to public use.
11. State will change character of the area.
12. International and American visitors enjoy Crystal Cove’s historic community charm.
13. Crystal Cove is unique and should be preserved.

[8] Improve interim plan to fully protect cottages and landscape

1. Concerned about transition plan.
2. The Interim Plan cannot protect cottages.
3. Concerned about fragile cottages. Vacancy will make them more vulnerable. Parks needs to take more action to protect structures during planning process.
4. Concerned about interim plan’s ability to take care of fragile cottages.

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5. The plan for six of the tenant-vacated cottages to be occupied by rangers cannot protect the cottages. Also need protection for the lower and upper cottage areas. With the loud wave noise, breaking glass is undetectable.
6. I feel the proposed plan is completely inadequate to protect the fragile fabric that exists and is sure to contribute significantly to the disintegration of these buildings.
7. Who will take care of the flowers?
8. Four rangers in four cottages can't protect all the cottages.

[6] Restore a few of the best cottages only

1. Only restore a few of the best examples of these cottages—remove the rest—people do not go to the cove because of the cottages.
2. Propose demolishing all buildings except for 5 or 6 for park operational uses.
3. I see no need for restoration of the buildings, perhaps one or two can be kept as restrooms, equipment storage, a park office or for educational purposes.
4. Less is more—only rehabilitate as many cottages as necessary to maintain Historic District rules. No more.
5. Restore no more than the 10 most architecturally-significant cottages.
6. Restore just one to three (approximately) buildings off the beach

[5] Remove all cottages

1. The ideal is to raze the cottages leaving just the beach. The cottages are important to a small number of people compared to the beach itself.
2. “Burn ‘em”
3. Many environmentalists would appreciate the historic district most if it was absent! Bulldoze the district and spend the money elsewhere.
4. Raze all the cottages. At the minimum, get rid of the cottages on the beach!
5. Forget spending \$20 million on cottages.

[4] Remove cottages on the beach

1. Cottages on beach should be removed.
2. Remove cottages from the sand and concentrate on remaining cottages.
3. I support removal of cottages on the beach and saving remaining cottages.
4. Tear down the cottages and there will be more room for plants and animals.

[3] Learn from others' preservation experience

1. Talk to the Sierra Club; they know how to restore cabins for public use
2. Look at “Duck House” and Bodie—short-term residence of ranger to “arrest decay.”
3. Support using Secretary of Interior's “Standards” in rehabilitation.

[2] Restore all cottages

1. The beach cottages must remain, repaired, and maintained.
2. Rebuild all existing home units.

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[2] Find funding from a mix of sources

1. Cottages should be made safe and accessible in stages through state funds, grants, and foundation donations.
2. We should be willing to budget to take care of our parks.

[2] Let civic organizations “adopt” and restore buildings

1. State Parks can restore several buildings for their uses and let civic organizations “adopt” buildings they will restore for park operational and educational uses.
2. Non-profit groups should find funding if they wish to save some cottages rather than use tax money.

[1] Do not rehab cabins at all as they are vacated

1. Do not rehab cabins at all as they become vacant.

[1] Restore cottages without conveniences

1. Limit re-construction of cabins to structural repairs. Leave out expensive utilities and plumbing!

[1] Do not let civic organizations “adopt” and restore buildings

1. Most people can’t afford to “adopt a cottage.”

[54 comments or 19% of input] Education and Interpretation

[13] Support arts center uses

1. Support arts center idea (workshops and artists-in-residence).
2. Support education of the history of this area and the environment by artists organizations.
3. Use should be art-oriented, as the history of the area is art-oriented.
4. Laguna Beach is an important mecca for ‘plein air’ artists.
5. Propose art center.
6. Day-use facilities for artists.
7. Some cottages can be used for educational purposes and artistic access.
8. Special use of any cottage should be limited to arts and/or education.
9. Use some abandoned cottages as art retreats or interpretive centers.
10. Arts community could help with fund-raising.
11. Support art center with gallery, artist in residence programs, and art workshops for adults and children. Art sales can support historic district.
12. I personally would like to see the Crystal Cove area dedicated to the arts and painting.
13. Support resources for artists but not artist residences.

[9] Support general educational uses

1. Support educational/interpretive use because it has lowest impact.
2. Provide some educational use.

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3. Public education on the eco-system, art history, and a myriad of other uses should be considered.
4. Support museum, art and educational uses.
5. Educational, arts, and environmental programs for children and adults.
6. Supports an “open air museum.”
7. Need inclusive interpretation of Native Americans, Spanish, and Japanese farmers.
8. Educational and cultural uses should be all inclusive.
9. One or two buildings could provide information on the history, educational, artistic values.

[9] Support environmental and marine interpretation

1. Support a nature center with exhibits in different languages and nature walks.
2. Nature education.
3. Animal and sea life education.
4. Interpret marine and terrestrial plants and animals
5. Support educational ocean and environmental programs.
6. Turn buildings into ocean and tidepool education buildings.
7. Environmental and marine resources are first priority
8. Visitors are interested in the natural resources and not in the cottages.
9. Environmental education through ranger programs of our precious marine and beach resources.

[6] Provide visitor center and interpretive support facilities

1. Use cottages for an information center.
2. Interpretive center with school field trips.
3. Museum/visitor center.
4. Interpretive center with docents and educational outreach.
5. Crystal Cove Interpretive Association should have a cottage for its use.
6. Use them for an interpretive center covering historical, flora and fauna of area..

[5] Use cottages for scientific purposes

1. Utilize one of the buildings to house dolphin research and education.
2. Conduct water quality research (freshwater and saltwater) from a cottage and share results with the public.
3. A “Clean Beach Institute” could be an adaptive use.
4. Facilitate research to determine role of cove to dolphins.
5. Use cottages for scientific purposes.

[5] Provide educational meeting areas

1. Support public meeting areas.
2. Use vacant cottages for retreats and education, etc.
3. Use as classrooms.
4. Use cottages for educational purposes.
5. Use them for classes and meeting rooms.

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[4] Support historic interpretation uses

1. Use some cottages as museums with period décor and others for “living history.”
2. Provide historical “stuff” to go with the historical district in a cottage.
3. Indian history interpretation.
4. Cultural center.

[3] Learn from others to benefit educational programs

1. Consult with the California Native Plant Society and Dr. Kelly of O.C.C. and Dr. Grant from U.C.I.
2. Suggest using educational programs of Audubon House as model.
3. Get the environmental nature center to help.

[30 comments or 11% of input] Tenant Evictions and Rental Income

[18] Rent cottages to current residents until a definite plan is in place

1. Keep the buildings occupied during the planning process.
2. Let residents stay until a firm plan is made.
3. Let the current residents stay until a plan is in place and they need to go.
4. These homes cannot be maintained without people living in them.
5. Why should tenants leave before a plan is in place? Tenants are guardians.
6. The vacated cottages currently cared for by State Parks have begun a serious slide in their deterioration. ...The logical alternative is to keep the cottages occupied as long as possible.
7. We can't afford to leave the cottages empty for any time until you are ready to work on them.
8. Let residents stay.
9. If vacated, area will not be safe.
10. Letting tenants protect cottages until final plan would bring in a lot of money.
11. Plans should be in place for renovation and occupying before having the current occupants leave.
12. Do not vacate cottages during planning process. Keep revenue during planning process.
13. Keep residents there until a plan is ready so they can take care of the cottages.
14. Use lease funds for renovation.
15. Current residents pay \$500,000 a year. Keep them until there is a definite plan.
16. Why should state give up tenant revenue before a plan is in place?
17. CCHD will become an attractive nuisance if tenants leave. It won't be safe. Keep tenants in CCHD.
18. Should keep CCHD and El Morro as revenue sources and affordable housing.

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[6] Lease cottages to current residents for long-term

1. Keep Crystal Cove a community. Refurbish and lease long-term to families.
2. Have the people stay in the cottages and make them fix them up and use their rent to maintain the others.
3. The residents must be encouraged to stay and maintain the structures. Consider giving them long term leases in exchange for repairing the cottages.
4. Let residents remain in their homes now.
5. Keep unique community even if smaller. Tenants can rent out to public at park-approved rates.
6. Let tenants stay and rent to public. Residents would pay for their own restoration if they were not restricted by rangers.

[6] Evict the tenants

1. I approve very much of the State's decision to evict all renters, so that plans can go forward expeditiously.
2. Nothing will happen until the tenants leave.
3. This is a state park not a private enclave. Get tenants out and allow others to experience this unique and special "touch of paradise."
4. They have owned the cottages for a generation with no meaningful access or return on investment.
5. Don't keep tenants in cottages.
6. I don't think its realistic to let the tenants stay because once you repair the area, they will just sue (again) to stay, as they've done in the past, or refuse to move (again).

[27 comments or 10% of input] The Planning Process

[13] Take the time needed to do good planning and to allow public input

1. Don't need to rush- take time.
2. Slow down the planning process and do the job right.
3. Adequate planning and comment time must be provided.
4. Take your time on planning.
5. Rather than have the cease and desist order to be the driving force on this project, perhaps the project would be better served by allowing the public review process to be the guiding force.
6. Cease and desist compliance should not constrain planning.
7. The department seems to be rushing to a decision to transfer control of the cove's future to a non-public group that promises to get the cottages restored through a conservancy.
8. Respect the 40 million owners of parks who were not at the meeting.
9. This is a visioning process.
10. Let's all work together to protect this valuable historic resource.
11. Our vision should not be constrained by monetary limits. We should not be constrained in our dreaming by rules for historic districts.

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12. The plan must show how the beaches and environment will be protected during construction. Maintaining the health of sealife, water quality, plants, and animals must be the epi-center of any and all plans!!!
13. Be very careful to sort out the response of current residents from those of the more important general public.

[8] Expand planning scope or redo existing plans

1. Planning process should encompass whole park.
2. The 1982 general plan should be scratched. A new three year period should be established to create an entirely new plan. El Morro must be included in the new plan.
3. Don't piecemeal plan- do it all together.
4. El Morro should be part of this discussion.
5. Do a master plan first.
6. Create a new EIR and master plan before cottages are abandoned.
7. Need a new EIR and plan since the old ones are no longer relevant.
8. Need constraints study on Underwater Park.

[4] Keep the public informed and involved

1. Support an open process.
2. Provide disclosure on all options.
3. Please, just what are the various alternatives available for the public to consider for the cottages and what are their ramifications?
4. The state must publish its scope of work and budget for the interim plan.

[2] Comply with existing codes and plans

1. Must adhere to Public Resources Code
2. Return to the 1982 plan. I like your presentation and thoughtful concerns in the planning process.

[10 comments or 3% of input] Natural habitats and processes

[6] Restore and protect marine environments, processes and species

1. Don't armor beach to protect cottages.
2. Restore the natural beach environment.
3. Support a dolphin birthing sanctuary.
4. A "no-catch" zone will help maintain the reintroduced kelp forests.
5. Dedicate the cove to its natural role as a wildlife refuge. Protect the tidepools, kelp beds and dolphin birthing area.
6. Restore all the natural processes.

[2] Restore and protect creek habitat

1. Widen creek delta. No bathrooms at creek end.
2. Restore creek through tunnel.

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[2] Restore and protect native plant communities

1. Remove exotic vegetation and restore native habitat.
2. Restore native plant communities.

Non-tabulated answers to survey question: When I visit the Crystal Cove Historic District I now enjoy:

The views, the ocean, the beach and sea life

- ☐ Living at the beach.
- ☐ The wonderful beach
- ☐ The view of the ocean
- ☐ The way it looks now
- ☐ The sea life
- ☐ The view and the tidepools
- ☐ The ocean, sand, geology, fresh air, tidepools, marine life
- ☐ The beautiful cove, unique houses, overall environment
- ☐ Driving by
- ☐ The natural environment
- ☐ The beach and ocean, not the cottages
- ☐ Clean water and beach

The historic cottages, cultural landscape and seclusion

- ☐ The special relationship between open space, ocean and small community
- ☐ The living beach community
- ☐ The small scale of the community
- ☐ Sense of going back in time
- ☐ It's a refuge from busy Orange County
- ☐ The solitude and natural setting
- ☐ Lack of commercial development

The plant life

- ☐ The eucalyptus trees
- ☐ The native plants
- ☐ The plants

Recreational opportunities and park security

- ☐ Walking on the beach
- ☐ Kayaking and bicycling through the park
- ☐ The idea that this area belongs to the people of California , not just the residents currently living there
- ☐ Security provided by lifeguards and rangers
- ☐ Underwater park access
- ☐ Knowing that the land the cottages now utilize will soon be available to all
- ☐ The Shake Shack